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EASTERN EUROPE: Reactions to Polish Crisis

East European countries are continuing their low-key public reporting of events in Poland, but officials in these states are privately apprehensive about the situation.

East German media are reporting summaries from official Polish news sources without comment. An East German Politburo member has [redacted] that Polish leader Gierek's speech last weekend was "the worst garbage ever broadcast," but said that his party could not afford to make public comments on it. The East German leadership probably is appalled that Gierek has offered concessions.

Another East German official characterized the speech as an admission that Gierek had been ignorant of the actual situation in his country and out of touch with the populace. He warned that the East German party must be on guard against a similar situation developing. East German leaders reportedly will concentrate on strengthening ties with the working class before the party congress next spring.

Romanian officials appear concerned that the Polish disturbances could have an unfavorable impact on their own discontented workers, who seem to be following these events with interest.

[redacted] Recent reports of labor unrest in numerous Romanian industrial centers--although apparently exaggerated--reflect rising popular dissatisfaction with the regime's austere economic policies.

Hungarian officials claim that although they face economic problems similar to Poland's, they are better prepared to deal with them because of the closer rapport they have developed with the workers. Nonetheless, they worry that Western investors will be scared away as a result of the situation in Poland.

The regime in Prague, which has poor relations with the country's workers, seems more concerned that social tension and economic malaise will intensify.

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